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LETTER DATED 17 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ETHIOPIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you a press statement, dated 7 December 1998, issued by an international fact-finding mission of the Standing Committee on Somalia that visited Somalia from 1 to 5 December 1998.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Duri MOHAMMED
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

PRESS STATEMENT

A delegation made up of representatives of countries and organizations that comprise the Standing Committee on Somalia has visited Hargeisa, Garowe and Bosaso for a fact-finding mission to assist the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) peace initiative in its contribution to the cause of peace, stability and reconciliation.

In each place, the delegation met with political leaders, parliamentarians, elders, women's groups, the business community, intellectuals, non-governmental organizations and international organizations.

The delegation continued to Mogadishu, but due to issues encountered in preparing the visit, it was decided to land temporarily at Merca to clarify the situation. In the course of pursuing further contacts, it became clear that to carry out the visit was not possible and it was postponed.

As a visit to Beletweyn had earlier been scheduled to follow the visit to Mogadishu, it was decided to reschedule it to a future date as well.

The members of the Standing Committee affirm their intention to complete their fact-finding mission at the earliest possibility.

Represented in the mission: Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia (Chairman), European Commission, IGAD secretariat, Italy, League of Arab States, Somalia, Aid Coordinating Body, Sudan, United Nations, Yemen.